QUESTIONS PRESENTED.

1. In order for a railroad employee to recover damages for personal injuries from his railroad employer under the general negligence section of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, 45 U. S. C. Sec. 51, by reason of an unsafe condition of a railroad stairway-platform maintained by the railroad on its premises for the use of such employee to perform his assigned duties, must the injured employee prove by a preponderance of the evidence that his railroad employer had actual or constructive knowledge of the defective condition of such facility causing the injury?

2. Should a railroad employer's duty to inspect a railroad car before requiring its employees to work upon it to determine that the place of work was reasonably safe as already pronounced by this Court be limited only to cars and appliances, or be extended to include all places of employment under the railroad's exclusive control?

3. When a railroad employee is injured by stepping into a hole created by a missing board which was part of a fixed-permanent stairway facility maintained by the railroad for the exclusive use of its employees, is the injured employee entitled to have his case submitted to the jury under the res ipsa loquitur doctrine to make a prima facie case of negligence against the defendant under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, even though such employee adduces some proof of specific negligence?

4. If the issues of fact concerning an injured employee's cause of action under the Federal Employers' Liability Act are erroneously submitted to the jury, in that the fact finding function of the jury as to negligence was narrowly restricted to the single issue of knowledge or

notice contrary to prior decisions of this Court, does such submission amount to an effective denial of the employee's rights to a jury trial under the Seventh Amendment of the United States Constitution?

STATUTES INVOLVED.

45 U. S. C., Section 51.

"Every common carrier by railroad while engaging in commerce between any of the several States or Territories, or between any of the States and Territories, or between the District of Columbia and any of the States or Territories, or between the District of Columbia or any of the States or Territories and any foreign nation or nations, shall be liable in damages to any person suffering injury while he is employed by such carrier in such commerce, or, in case of the death of such employee, to his or her personal representative, for the benefit of the surviving widow or husband and children of such employee; and, if none, then of such employee's parents; and, if none, then of the next of kin, dependent upon such employee, for such injury or death resulting in whole or in part from the negligence of any of the officers, agents or employees of such carrier, or by reason of any defect or insufficiency, due to its negligence, in its cars, engines, appliances, machinery, track, roadbed, works, boats, wharves, or other equipment.

"Any employee of carrier, any part of whose duties as such employee shall be the furtherance of interstate or foreign commerce; or shall, in any way directly or closely and substantially, affect such commerce as above set forth shall, for the purposes of this chapter, be considered as being employed by such carrier in such commerce and shall be considered as entitled to the benefits of this chapter."

STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

For convenience, we will refer to the parties as they stood in the Trial Court. Thus, Petitioner, will be hereinafter referred to as either "plaintiff" or "McKee." Respondent will be hereinafter referred to as either "defendant" or "Railroad."

Plaintiff filed Complaint on August 30, 1962, charging his employer, defendant herein, with negligence under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, 45 U. S. C., Sections 51 through 60, as amended. The jurisdiction of the District Court, and applicability of the Federal Employers' Liability Act was unchallenged by either party (148a).

The gravamen of plaintiff's Complaint was that while on his way to a signal bridge shanty on railroad premises, pursuant to orders from his superior, plaintiff was using a certain stairway-platform which was a railroad facility maintained by the bridges and building department of the railroad for the exclusive use of railroad employees. Plaintiff himself was a yard brakeman-conductor and member of the transportation department, who had no duties regarding maintenance of yard facilities. A plank or board was missing from said facility. As plaintiff was ascending the stairway in the night season he stepped into the hole created by the missing board, sustaining serious permanent injuries.

The railroad denied any knowledge, actual or constructive, as to how the board came to be missing, although it was conceded that at the time plaintiff stepped into it there was indeed a hole created by a missing board. The Trial Court, over plaintiff's objections, though submitting a general verdict, by its charge, narrowed the entire case down to a single issue, i.e., knowledge. Thus the charge states:

> "As I said before No. 1 [interrogatory] has to do with whether you find the Defendant Railroad Company had notice, either actual or constructive, that the board was missing. *Now, if your answer to that is "No," you will not be required to answer any of the rest of these interrogatories."* (Emphasis added) (164a.)

The jury returned a general verdict in favor of defendant (174a) and at the same time answered only Interrogatory No. 1 as follows:

> "We, the jury, being first duly impaneled and sworn, do find as follows on the factual issues set forth below:
>
> 'Has the plaintiff proven by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant had either actual or constructive notice that the board was missing prior to Mr. McKee's accident?
>
> 'Answer: No.' "

Plaintiff sought a new trial from the Trial Court and from the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals on the theory that the plaintiff should not have had the burden of having to prove knowledge or notice to the railroad of a patent defect in a specific facility under its exclusive control for the exclusive use of its employees, *where plaintiff did prove that defendant never inspected this facility for defects.* At the very least, plaintiff contended he was entitled to the benefit of the res ipsa loquitur doctrine so as to permit the jury to infer negligence on the part of the railroad regarding its maintenance of such facility. The Trial Court refused to consider any form of the application of the res ipsa loquitur doctrine. (See Appendix A.)

The pertinent facts relating to the physical layout and the immediate circumstances of the injury were never in dispute. The uncontroverted evidence established that the City of Ashtabula, Ohio, had certain property which at one

time was used by the railroad people as a parking lot (64a, 180a). To the west of this parking lot on private railroad property was a converted boxcar used as a Signal Bridge shanty. This shanty was used as a yard office by the railroad crews to relieve the men working the preceding trick (179a). The parking lot was approximately opposite the Signal Bridge shanty (13a). Separating the railroad private property from the parking lot was a ditch approximately 5 to 6 feet wide, running in a north-south direction. Part of this ditch ran underneath the shanty (14a, 180a, 181a). To gain access to the Signal Bridge shanty from the parking lot, i.e., to get across the ditch, the railroad maintained two bridges, both of which were in use at the time of plaintiff's accident (15a). The bridge being employed by plaintiff at the time of his injury was the south bridge, which was strictly on railroad property (78a). Both bridges at all times pertinent were held open by the company as a company facility (41a). The south bridge was in frequent use by the men (41a). All of the witnesses agreed that the bridges had been in use in essentially the same condition during their length of service in the Ashtabula Yards of defendant, which would be in excess of twenty (20) years.

The bridges themselves consisted of old railroad ties laid across the ditch, one on the north side of the shanty, and one on the south side (38a, 39a, 41a). Neither bridge had any handrail (41a). *Both bridges were regarded as unsafe* (40a). Both bridges were under the exclusive jurisdiction of the bridges and building department of the railroad (35a, 46a). *There was never any known inspection of the condition of these facilities by the bridges and building department* (46a, 47a). *There were no known repairs or improvements to either of these facilities known to any of the men who had been working there in excess of twenty (20) years* (47a, 56a, 83a, 84a).

It was undisputed in the evidence that at the westerly end of the south bridge was a set of about three steps or treads which led to a wooden platform. The south bridge facility consisted of the ties across the ditch, the steps, and the platform at the top of the steps (180a, 181a, 182a). The wood platform was constructed of short pieces of plank (boards). It was a permanent and integral part of the south bridge facility (51a).

At the time of his accident, plaintiff McKee was working what was known as the third trick pusher job (82a, 83a, 183a). On the night of his accident, plaintiff first parked his automobile on the west side of the ditch at a place approximately one-half mile away known as O. D. Tower (91a, 100a). Plaintiff had stopped using the parking lot opposite the shanty about a year before his accident (85a, 86a, 97a). Plaintiff was sent by his boss back to the shanty from the O. D. Tower with orders to get the rest of the crew (91a, 92a, 93a). Plaintiff then drove and parked his car in the parking lot approximately opposite the shanty in the general vicinity of the south bridge (92a). Plaintiff's purpose in using the bridge and stairway that night was to carry out the orders he had been given by the night superintendent to get the other two men at the Signal Bridge shanty and hurry back to the west yard (93a). As plaintiff was ascending the stairway at the west end of the ties across the ditch that constituted the south bridge and got onto the platform, his right leg went into a hole (94a, 95a). The hole was created by a missing board (104a). The missing board was either the first or second north plank constituting part of the platform at the head of the stairway (78a).

Plaintiff had no warning of the existence of this missing plank in the platform (21a). He had never seen the missing plank before the accident, though he did observe it afterwards (94a). *The last time plaintiff had used this*

stairway and platform was approximately six to eight weeks before his accident (105a). When plaintiff's right leg went into the hole created by the missing plank, the rest of his body twisted (95a, 123a). There was substantial medical testimony that as a result of the twist to his right knee plaintiff sustained a torn cartilage and other substantial derangements to his right knee joint, which, after several surgical procedures, rendered him permanently and totally disabled.

After plaintiff stepped into this hole created by the missing plank, he was discovered by a co-worker, Ashley, who then observed the location of the hole (51a, 52a), and described the location as being where the pipe underneath was located (57a, 60a). *Ashley, however, could not state how long the board had been missing* (54a, 67a, 189a). The only witness purporting to have knowledge on the issue of notice was another co-worker named Charles D. Nelson. Nelson testified that he observed a missing step at the top of the walk of the south bridge before taking his vacation in August, 1961 (16a, 23a, 24a, 34a). He claimed to have reported this missing board to his yard master, Slim Meyers (17a). At the time of the trial, Slim Meyers was dead (47a). It was established through the union legislative representative, Sheridan T. Wilcox, that Slim Meyers was the proper person to whom such defect should be reported (46a). Since plaintiff's injury occurred on August 15, 1961, Nelson's testimony, if believed by the jury, would give the company at least better than two weeks notice of the missing board or step prior to plaintiff's injury.

However, Nelson admitted that prior to giving his testimony in Court he had been visited by the District Claim Agent of the railroad, one Robert J. Kelly, whom he knew to be a Claim Agent (34a). That he knew that

Kelly was taking down a statement from him (25a). He admitted that he lied to Kelly, for when Kelly was at his home, he told Kelly that he never at any time, using the south approach and steps, found any steps missing (24a, 25a). As a matter of fact, on cross examination by defendant's counsel, the following took place:

> "Q. Was this question asked of you—you're telling me, now, you lied to Mr. Kelly last Thursday night?
> A. Yes, sir." (25a.)

Nelson admitted that he had given an earlier statement in 1963 to plaintiff's investigator, but he did not tell plaintiff's investigator that the step was in good condition before the accident, as he had told Kelly (26a). Nelson's excuse for lying to Kelly was that he had gotten into an argument with his wife about being involved in the case, and was afraid that he would lose his job (25a). However, upon further cross examination, defendant's counsel brought out all of the safeguards for job security and job protection which would prevent Nelson from losing his job if he told the truth to the claim agent (29a, 30a).

Thus, while the undisputed testimony established that plaintiff injured himself stepping into a hole created by a missing plank or board, which was part of a company facility, used exclusively by railroad people on railroad property under the railroad's exclusive possession and control, there was no testimony to establish either actual or constructive notice of this missing plank or board *other than the testimony of Nelson.* With the Interrogatories as submitted, and the Court's charge pertaining to these Interrogatories, the jury was, therefore, left with no alternative but to find for the defendant, *unless the jury accepted Nelson's testimony about the existence of the missing plank or board and his having reported it to a*

proper official. Plaintiff was thus forced to have his entire case rise or fall upon the testimony of an impeached witness whom the jury, by its answer to the Interrogatory, and its verdict, obviously chose to disbelieve.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT.

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED ARE OF IMPORTANCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT.

The issue raised by this appeal confronts this Court with a question of law in the construction of 45 U. S. C., Section 51, not heretofore decided by this Court. This issue is whether an employee is required to adduce proof by a preponderance of the evidence of knowledge or notice to his employer of an existing patent unsafe condition of the railroad premises to establish negligence within the meaning of 45 U. S. C., Section 51. The corollary to this issue is whether, assuming that the employee has this burden, is he at least entitled to have the jury charged on the res ipsa loquitur doctrine to permit an inference of knowledge or notice when the unsafe condition, admittedly existing, which was the producing cause of the injury, was on railroad premises under the exclusive possession and control of the railroad, and which the railroad purported to maintain through its own bridges and building department.

1. **In order for a railroad employee to recover damages for personal injuries from his railroad employer under the general negligence section of the Federal Employers' Liability Act, 45 U. S. C. Sec. 51, by reason of an unsafe condition of a railroad stairway-platform maintained by the railroad on its premises for the use of such employee to perform his assigned duties, must the injured employee prove by a preponderance of the evidence that his railroad employer had actual or constructive knowledge of the defective condition of such facility causing the injury?**

2. **Should a railroad employer's duty to inspect a railroad car before requiring its employees to work upon it to determine that the place of work was reasonably safe as already pronounced by this Court be limited only to cars and appliances, or be extended to include all places of employment under the railroad's exclusive control?**

A moment's reflection demonstrates the critical importance of a pronouncement by this Court on these vital issues. Many railroad employees are constantly being injured by stepping into holes, tripping over obstructions, slipping and falling, and in numerous other ways while performing assigned work duties in a railroad yard, particularly in the night season. In virtually all such cases the employee has no prior knowledge as to how the dangerous condition came into being or how long before the injury it existed. Normally a transportation employee carrying out assigned duties relies upon maintenance employees of one class or another to maintain the working premises in suitable condition. Normally such employee is not in a position to prove how the premises became unsafe or how long the unsafe condition existed. To place upon such

injured employees the burden of ferreting out witnesses, inevitably under the domination and control of the railroad employer, in the hopes of finding someone who can state in terms of "time" how long such dangerous or unsafe condition existed before the accident, defeats a goodly number of meritorious claims. Stated differently, is there any good reason why the law, as already pronounced by this Court, as applicable to railroad cars should not be equally applicable to yards and other general railroad premises necessary for the performance by employees of their assigned duties?

In *Shenker vs. B. & O. Railroad Co.*, 374 U. S. 1, 83 S. Ct. 1667 (1963), this Court imposed an absolute duty of inspection by the employing railroad upon a foreign railroad car before permitting its baggage man employee to perform work upon the car. The baggage door proved to be defective, causing a serious injury to the employee. The employee was permitted recovery without any proof of actual or constructive knowledge of the defective condition to the employing railroad being shown. Such knowledge, actual or constructive, was unnecessary to recovery, because this Court imposed upon the employing railroad a positive, affirmative duty to inspect the car before requiring its employee to work upon it:

> "We hold that the B. & O. had a duty to inspect P. & L. E. cars before permitting its employees to work with them." (374 U. S. 8, 83 S. Ct. 1672.)

Thus, the breach of duty in *Shenker* was not an inspection negligently performed, *but in failing to inspect at all!* By thus imposing this positive affirmative duty of inspection, the employee was relieved of the burden of proving knowledge or notice where he could prove that no prior inspection had been made. It will be recalled in the

case at bar, that every witness who testified in the case, Wilcox, Ashley, McKee, Nelson, etc., admitted that there was no known inspection or repair of the south bridge facility with its adjacent step and platform for the twenty (20) years or more that these various employees had worked about the premises. In fact, the railroad never claimed that it did so inspect. The railroad did not produce a single witness to testify as to maintenance or inspection procedures, or to show any attempt at inspection. Neither the supervisor nor any member of the bridges and building department, concededly charged with the duty of maintaining, in suitable working condition, the facility complained of, was called as a witness by the defendant to establish any attempt to inspect, maintain or repair this particular facility.

Shenker was not a Safety Appliance Act case (45 U. S. C., Sections 1 through 11, as amended). The issue before this Court in *Shenker* was whether plaintiff was provided a safe place to work within the meaning of 45 U. S. C., Section 51. This Court described the issue in the following language:

> "The present case has been argued to us on the basis of these same decisions and the safe-place-to-work doctrine. The respondent admits the general statement of the doctrine in these cases. It bases its defense solely on the proposition that because the P. & L. E. train had just pulled into the station, the B. & O. did not have sufficient opportunity to obtain actual or constructive notice of the defective mail car door." (374 U. S. 7, 83 S. Ct. 1672.)

The argument advanced by defendant in the case at bar was that *Shenker* should be confined to cases involving defects to rolling stock and appliances. No reason has been given as to why an employee injured by a patent defect in

the railroad premises should have a higher burden of proof of negligence than an employee similarly injured by a defective car or appliance. Section 51 itself (which was the gravamen of negligence in *Shenker* as well as the case at bar) makes the employing railroad liable when the negligence is the result "of any defect or insufficiency, due to its negligence, in its cars, engines, appliances, machinery, track, roadbed, *works,* boats, wharves, *or other equipment.*" The case at bar provides this Court with the opportunity to speak out and determine whether the continuing duty of inspection imposed by *Shenker* as to "cars" is to be extended to include all facilities and premises encompassed by the express statutory language of Section 51.

A suggestion of the issue of the employee's burden in this class of cases to produce specific proof of knowledge or notice is contained in *Webb vs. Illinois Central Railroad Co.,* 228 F. 2d 257 (7th Circuit, 1956); reversed 352 U. S. 514, 77 S. Ct. 451 (1957). The grounds for reversing a jury verdict in favor of the plaintiff by the Seventh Circuit which then remanded the case for final judgment for the defendant railroad is stated as follows:

> "To make a submissible case it was encumbent on plaintiff to adduce substantial evidence that defendant either negligently placed the clinker in the ballast or was chargeable with notice, either actual or constructive of its presence therein." (228 F. 2d 259.)

This Court held that there was a sufficiency of evidence for the jury to conclude that the railroad did negligently cause or permit the large clinker which occasioned the plaintiff's injury to get into ballast in a place where he was performing work duties, *or that the inspection procedures of the railroad were inadequate to discover and remove the hazard* (352 U. S. 513, 77 S. Ct. 453). Further, however, and suggestive at least of the issue raised by the

instant appeal is the following language of this Court in the *Webb* case:

> "The Court of Appeals viewed the evidence as insufficient to raise a jury question because the petitioner did not adduce proofs showing what standard procedures were followed to prevent large clinkers from being used in road ballast and inspecting roadbeds for hazards to firm footing. We do not think that the petitioner's evidence was lacking in such proofs, *even if we assume, and we question, that he had that burden.*" (352 U. S. 513, 77 S. Ct. 453.) (Emphasis added.)

The question is now squarely before this Court by the instant Petition for Certiorari as to whether the employee does have the burden of producing a witness whose testimony will be accepted by the jury to establish a *determinable* time period of the existence of the claimed dangerous condition of the premises in order to satisfy the requirement of burden of proof of notice or knowledge. It is petitioner's earnest belief that the equities of the situation require the logical extension of the *Shenker* doctrine to remove this burden from injured employee *where he is able to prove, as was done in this case, an utter lack of inspection by the proper railroad department charged with maintaining the facility which occasioned the injury.*

3. **When a railroad employee is injured by stepping into a hole created by a missing board which was part of a fixed-permanent stairway facility maintained by the railroad for the exclusive use of its employees, is the injured employee entitled to have his case submitted to the jury under the res ipsa loquitur doctrine to make a prima facie case of negligence against the defendant under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, even though such employee adduces some proof of specific negligence?**

The inequity of foisting this burden of proving a determinable time period to establish knowledge or notice on the injured employee, often unable to meet it, has produced conflicting, confusing decisions in lower courts. To remedy this inequity these Courts have been wrestling with various procedural devices in order to give lip service to the common law rule and still enable the employee to present a submissible case for jury determination. The most common procedural technique adopted in the various circuits has been to permit the employee to rely upon the res ipsa loquitur doctrine.

The Sixth Circuit itself, in a case involving a defective appliance, where the injured employee produced no evidence of knowledge or notice, used the res ipsa loquitur device to sustain the cause of action. See *Miller vs. Cincinnati, N. O. T. Pac. Ry. Co.*, 317 F. 2d 693 (1963). In its decision in the case at bar, no reasoning was given by the Sixth Circuit (See Appendix "B") as to why the reasoning in the *Miller* case should not have been available to plaintiff in the instant case, except to say that there was no necessity to apply the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur because the plaintiff's proofs here establish the defective condition of the bridge without the necessity of applying the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The fallacy of this reasoning is

that although plaintiff's proofs did establish the defective "condition," they did not establish any "knowledge" to the railroad of the defective condition, *except through the impeached testimony of Nelson.*

We believe that in substantial measure the Sixth Circuit affirmed the judgment below because of an inadvertent error in reading the charge of the Trial Court, which in the opinion of the Sixth Circuit, gave the jury its full fact finding powers envisioned by the Seventh Amendment and its application to the Federal Employers' Liability Act as construed by this Court. Thus it will be noted from the opinion of the Sixth Circuit (Appendix "B") in its review of the charge of the Trial Court on the issue of notice, the opinion quotes the Trial Court as charging the jury as follows:

> "You are further instructed that upon proof by plaintiff of a defect of such facility under defendant's exclusive possession, management and control, which renders such facility unreasonably hazardous as to his safety as an employee, the plaintiff upon such proof, makes a prima facie case of negligence against the defendant which entitles you, the jury, to infer that defendant was negligent in failing to use reasonable care to provide a reasonably safe facility, and particularly that defendant could and should have discovered the defective condition thereof, and provided an adequate warning of its existence or corrected the defect."

Quite obviously if this charge had been given, as the Sixth Circuit in its original opinion *erroneously* thought it was, then the conclusion of the Sixth Circuit that the plaintiff's rights were fully protected below would obviously have been correct. The purpose of filing the Petition for Rehearing was to call to the attention of the Sixth Circuit that the charge of the Trial Court had been erroneously misread, and that the foregoing charge, *al-*

though specifically requested by plaintiff's counsel, had been refused not only in the language submitted, but the substance thereof (202a). In fact, the Trial Court charged the jury *exactly the opposite* of the language contained in the opinion of the Sixth Circuit, charging the jury as follows:

> "Negligence of the Defendant shall not be inferred from the fact that Mr. McKee has been injured. The Plaintiff has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the board, which was missing at the time and place of Mr. McKee's accident, *was actually known to have been missing for a sufficient length of time which,* in the exercise of ordinary care, would charge the Defendant with constructive notice and, in the exercise of ordinary care, with the duty to repair the condition or effectively (356) warn the Plaintiff of its existence." (151a.) (Emphasis added.)

Further in the Petition for Rehearing, plaintiff's counsel pointed out to the Sixth Circuit that even if the plaintiff did attempt to meet his burden of proof by specific proof of negligence, that under Ohio law, this did not preclude the right to rely upon the res ipsa loquitur doctrine. *Oberlin vs. Friedman,* 5 Oh. St. 2d 1 (1965), second paragraph of the Syllabus of the Court. Res ipsa loquitur is a rule of evidence to permit the jury to make inferences of fact, and not a proposition of substantive law. Under Rule 43(a), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, plaintiff in this case should have been entitled to the charge requested. The order of the Sixth Circuit denying the Petition for Rehearing (Appendix "C") merely reiterated the opinion of the Court below that the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur was not applicable without stating why.

Surely no good reason can be advanced to limit this doctrine to defective conditions of rolling stock and appli-

ances. Section 51 applies to dangerous conditions of the premises generally, where railroad employees are required to work. See *B. & O. Railroad Co. vs. Flechtner,* 300 F. 318 (1924); *Weigand vs. Pennsylvania R. R. Co.,* 267 F. 2d 281 (1959); *Forsman vs. Pennsylvania R. R. Co.,* 280 F. 2d 315 (1960). Cf. *Fassbinder vs. Pennsylvania R. R. Co.,* 322 F. 2d 859 (1963). The confusion engendered by attempting to give lip service to a doctrine not applicable to this class of litigation is well demonstrated in the recent opinion of *Marquardt vs. Kansas City Southern Railway Co.,* 358 S. W. 2d 49 (Mo. 1962), 2 A. L. R. 3d 1311 (1962). The entire subject with its conflicting results depending upon the forum of litigation is well annotated, 2 *A. L. R.* 3d 1335, *et seq.*

4. **If the issues of fact concerning an injured employee's cause of action under the Federal Employers' Liability Act are erroneously submitted to the jury, in that the fact finding function of the jury as to negligence was narrowly restricted to the single issue of knowledge or notice contrary to prior decisions of this Court, does such submission amount to an effective denial of the employee's rights to a jury trial under the Seventh Amendment of the United States Constitution?**

The instruction of the Trial Court, affirmed by the Sixth Circuit, removed from the jury any power to make an inference of negligence from the fact that the occurrence had taken place upon a facility under the railroad's exclusive possession and control which it was charged by law with the duty to maintain. More perniciously, the device of Interrogatory No. 1, with its explanatory instruction, forced the plaintiff's entire case to rely upon the adequacy of his proofs on this single issue.

Such limited submission of the case is contrary to prior determinations by this Court. In Federal Employers' Liability Act cases this Court has repeatedly held that the jury has a right to search the evidence as a whole, and give weight to the factors and circumstances as a whole, in determining whether the non-delegable duty of providing a reasonably safe place to work has been complied with. See *Union Pacific Co. vs. Hadley,* 246 U. S. 330, 38 S. Ct. 318 (1918); *Bailey vs. Central Vermont Railway Co.,* 319 U. S. 350, 63 S. Ct. 1062 (1943); *Blair vs. B. & O. Railway Co.,* 232 U. S. 600, 65 S. Ct. 545 (1945); *McBride vs. Toledo-Terminal Railroad Co.,* 354 U. S. 517, 77 S. Ct. 1398 (1957); *Dennis vs. Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Co.,* 375 U. S. 208, 84 S. Ct. 291 (1964); *Arnold vs. Panhandle & Santa Fe Ry. Co.,* 353 U. S. 360, 77 S. Ct. 84 (1957). The use of special Interrogatories under Rule 49 (b) contemplates a testing to see whether the jury's verdict can be harmonized with specific findings on essential fact. Perhaps as good an explanation as any is found in the recent text of Mathes and Devitt, "Federal Jury Practice and Instructions," West Publishing Co. (1965), as follows:

> "Where a general verdict is used, Rule 49(b) authorizes the Court in its discretion, to submit to the jury written Interrogatories on one or more of the fact issues *upon which the verdict necessarily depends.*" (Emphasis added.) (Page 45.)

CONCLUSION.

Petitioner earnestly contends that the manner in which his case was submitted to the jury effectively deprived him of the complete trial by jury envisioned by Congress in its enactment of the Federal Employers' Liability Act. The questions presented by this Petition

have not heretofore been pronounced by this Court, but recur with great frequency in the class of litigation involved. There is a lack of unanimity in the handling of this problem by the Courts below with much conflict and confusion to the bench, bar, and litigant, requiring a pronouncement by this Court. For the foregoing reasons, this Petition for a Writ of Certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

MARSHALL I. NURENBERG,
Attorney for Petitioner.

APPENDIX A.

MEMORANDUM IN RE: SETTLEMENT AND APPROVAL OF RECORD ON APPEAL AND MOTION FOR A NEW TRIAL.

(Filed September 29, 1964.)

KALBFLEISCH, *J.*

In plaintiff's suit against defendant under the Federal Employers Liability Act the jury returned a verdict for defendant. Plaintiff now has filed a three-branch motion for a new trial.

The first branch of plaintiff's motion asserts that the verdict of the jury is contrary to the mainfest weight of the evidence. In determining whether a jury verdict in a civil case is manifestly against the weight of the evidence, the evidence must be reviewed in the light of the rule of preponderance, and such verdict will not be vacated or set aside unless it is *manifestly* contrary to the weight of the evidence. The Court finds there is substantial evidence to support the verdict; therefore, the first branch of the motion for a new trial will be overruled.

The second and third branches of plaintiff's motion, if not repetitious, are so similar as to permit the Court to describe them as claims that the Court erred in it instructions to the jury by failing to give the plaintiff the benefit of an instruction upon the (2) doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. Before considering branches 2 and 3, the Court must initially determine whether the record shows that the plaintiff complied with Rule 51, Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

The record discloses that the jury was sworn and the case commenced on April 6, 1964, and the court stenographer in attendance throughout the trial was N. M. Czompoly. The introduction of evidence was concluded

when both parties rested at 2:00 P.M. on April 9, 1964. Thereafter the record contains the following:

> "(Thereupon a discussion ensued at the bench between the Court and counsel out of the hearing of the jury.)"
>
> The Court then addressed the jury in part as follows:
>
> "In order to complete this case, from this point on, the attorneys on each side will have an opportunity to argue their case; and then the Court must instruct you as to the law of the case.
>
> "Now, when we recessed at noon, it was indicated that counsel wanted to discuss with the Court the instructions which the Court would give, and it was not known by the attorneys at that time how long they would be before they would finish the evidence. It has transpired that we have finished with the evidence in this case at this point, and the lawyers still want to talk to me about what instructions I am going to give, before they argue the case to you.
>
> "Now, it is obvious that we can't sit and talk about this and iron out questions that we have to iron out in a few minutes."

According to the record there was a further short comment by the Court, after which the case was adjourned until 10:00 A. M. Friday, April 10th.

The record for April 10, 1964, begins with the opening of court and contains thereafter the closing arguments presented by Messrs. Nurenberg and Dolan, which arguments occupied the entire morning session. Next, the record shows that the trial was resumed at 1:30 P.M., when the Court instructed the jury. At the conclusion of the Court's charge, the Court inquired as follows:

> "Do counsel have any further suggestions?"

(3) It is important to note at this point that plaintiff's counsel made no response to this question, nor does the record disclose that the plaintiff objected to the instructions

as given; in fact, plaintiff's counsel in his brief admits "plaintiff did not request any additions or corrections in the charge."

Rule 51, of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, provides, in part:

> "No party may assign as error the giving or the failure to give an instruction unless he objects thereto before the jury retires to consider its verdict, stating distinctly the matter to which he objects and the grounds of his objection. Opportunity shall be given to make the objection out of the hearing of the jury."

The object of Rule 51 is to afford a trial judge opportunity to correct error in his charge before the case is finally submitted to the jury. *Moore v. Stevens,* 271 F. 2d 119, 120 (6th Cir. 1959). In the cases of *Williams v. Powers,* 135 F. 2d 153, and *Louisville & Nashville R. R. Co. v. Farmer,* 220 F. 2d 90, the Sixth Circuit has declared that formal exceptions to instructions under Rule 51 are not required if "it appears in the record that the point urged on appeal was called to the attention of the trial court in such manner as to clearly advise it as to the question of law involved." Although the official stenographic record as above related reveals that the Court, shortly before adjournment on April 9, stated to the jury "that counsel wanted to discuss with the Court the instructions which the Court would give," there is nothing in the record to indicate that at that time, or at any other time, plaintiff's counsel called to the Court's attention the questions of law which plaintiff's counsel now urges on appeal.

The jury's verdict in favor of the defendant was returned on April 14, 1964. On Friday, April 24, plaintiff's counsel dictated a statement to Mr. Czompoly, the court stenographer, and on the same (4) day the stenographer transcribed the statement and delivered the original of

the transcription to the Court. This statement dictated by plaintiff's counsel hereinafter will be referred to as "the transcript." On Monday, April 27, 1964, the Court caused the transcript to be filed with the Clerk of the Court.

The record is silent as to how, when, and by whom the transcript was served on counsel for the defendant, but apparently it was served because on May 28, 1964, counsel for the defendant filed a motion to strike the transcript, which motion is entitled "Motion to Strike from the Files Purported Objections of Counsel for the Plaintiff to the General Charge, Filed April 27, 1964."

Counsel for plaintiff and defendant in their briefs upon the question of the admissibility of the transcript devote their entire attention to the applicability of Rule 51, F. R. C. P. Neither counsel makes any reference to Rule 75(n), which provides as follows:

> "In the event no stenographic report of the evidence or proceedings at a hearing or trial was made, the appellant may prepare a statement of the evidence or proceedings from the best available means, including his recollection, for use instead of a stenographic transcript. This statement shall be served on the appellee who may serve objections or propose amendments thereto within 10 days after service upon him. Thereupon the statement, with the objections or proposed amendments, shall be submitted to the district court for settlement and approval and as settled and approved shall be included by the clerk of the court in the record on appeal."

Nor do counsel make reference to Rule 75(h), which provides in part as follows:

> "It is not necessary for the record on appeal to be approved by the district court or judge thereof except as provided in subdivisions (m) and (n) of this rule and in Rule 76, but if any difference arises as to

> whether the record truly discloses what occurred in the district court, the difference shall be submitted to and settled by that court and the record made to conform to the truth."

(5) By reason of the failure of counsel to strictly comply with or to make any reference to Rule 75(h) or (n), some doubt is cast upon whether the transcript was sought to be lodged in accord with Rule 75(n). The transcript is obviously an effort by plaintiff's counsel to cure his failure to timely object, so that the official record would show a compliance with Rule 51.

The fact is that counsel and the Court did meet in the Court's chambers immediately following the adjournment on the afternoon of April 9th and did there discuss the propriety of certain interrogatories which counsel requested the Court to submit to the jury, and did at considerable length discuss the law of the case as well as the instructions the Court intended to give to the jury. This discussion in chambers dealt with the Court's charges and refusals to charge, as well as the propriety of interrogatories which counsel submitted. There was no stenographer present, and the discussion was not entered on the minutes of the court or otherwise reduced to record form. Nevertheless, the discussion was a proceeding during the trial. *Middleton v. Hartford Accident & Indemnity Co.*, 119 F. 2d 721, 723:

> " 'Proceedings' include the oral motions and judgments during the trial, the rulings on evidence, the selection of the jury where there is one, the charges and refusals to charge, and the many occurrences of a trial which are not entered on the minutes of the court or otherwise reduced to record form."

In the interest of justice, and to make the record conform to the truth, I hold that the transcript is submittable

under Rule 75(h) and (n), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Defendant's motion to strike from the files the so-called transcript will be treated by the Court as an objection under Rule 75(n). It is to be noted that defendant's brief in support of its motion does not object to or propose any amendments to the statements of plaintiff's counsel in the transcript, except the following sentences appearing in the first paragraph of the brief:

> (6) "Counsel met with the Court the morning of April 10 and were advised by the Court of the substance of the charge. At the conclusion both *counsel for the plaintiff and counsel for the defendant expressed their approval of the charge as outlined by the Court.*"

This proposed amendment is true and correct as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. In fairness to plaintiff's counsel, the Court must add that while he made no objection to the specific language employed by the Court he did strenuously urge that the substance of the charge was erroneous in that it did not include a charge on the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur, to which plaintiff's counsel said he was entitled.

The Court settles and approves the following statement for the record on appeal, in accord with Rule 75(h) and (n), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure:

> On Thursday, April 9, 1964, upon request by both counsel at the conclusion of the evidence, counsel retired with the Court to discuss proposed charges prepared by both counsel, as well as interrogatories prepared by counsel for the defense; all of which had been exchanged between counsel and submitted to the Court prior to the above-stated retirement to the chambers of the Court.

The Court first considered the proposed charges of the plaintiff. With regard to Charge No. 1, the last paragraph thereof read as follows:

> "You are further instructed that upon proof by Plaintiff of a defect in such facility under Defendant's exclusive possession, management and control, which renders such facility unreasonably hazardous to his safety as an employee, the Plaintiff, upon such proof, makes a prima facie case of negligence against the Defendant which entitles you, the jury, to infer that Defendant was negligent in failing to use reasonable care to provide a reasonably safe facility, and particularly that Defendant could and should have discovered the defective condition thereof and provided an adequate warning of its existence or corrected the defect."

(7) In discussion of this charge, the official volumes upon which it was based were handed to the Court, namely, 317 F. 2d 693, containing the case of *Miller v. Cincinnati, N. O. & T. Pacific Ry. Co.*, and 374 U. S. 1, containing the case of *Shenker v. B. & O.*

The Court stated, after having carefully considered the contents of both of the above-stated opinions, that the requested charge by plaintiff was based upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur; and that in the opinion of the Court the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur was not applicable to the facts as shown by the evidence in the instant case. The Court, therefore, stated that he would not give the charge proposed; and when requested to charge upon the substance thereof, stated that he would not give any charge involving the res ipsa loquitur doctrine because of his belief that the doctrine was not applicable to the facts of the case.

Upon consideration of the charges requested by the defendant, the Court agreed to give defendant's first instruction, reading as follows:

> "Negligence of the defendant shall not be inferred from the fact that Mr. McKee has been in-

jured. The plaintiff has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the board which was missing at the time and place of Mr. McKee's accident was actually known to have been missing by the defendant or had been missing for a sufficient length of time to charge the defendant with constructive notice and in the exercise of ordinary care with the duty to repair the condition or effectively warn the plaintiff of its existence."

Counsel for the plaintiff advised the Court that the giving of this instruction, without giving plaintiff's requested instruction on the res ipsa loquitur doctrine, was objectionable to the plaintiff.

At the conclusion of discussion of the charges, the Court then discussed the various interrogatories propounded by the defendant.

With regard to Interrogatory No. 1, which was given, the plaintiff advised the Court that he objected to Interrogatory No. 1 as it was the belief of plaintiff that interrogatories should be directed to the ultimate issues of fact to be decided by the jury and not merely to evidentiary facts, bearing upon the ultimate issue of fact.

(8) The Court settles and approves as part of the record that, during the discussions which occurred in the Court's chambers on the afternoon of April 9 and the morning of April 10, plaintiff's counsel distinctly objected to the instructions which the Court stated would be given and, further, that he clearly advised the Court that the plaintiff was entitled to an instruction on the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The Court further settles and approves that at the time plaintiff's counsel objected and stated his desire for an instruction upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur the Court advised plaintiff's counsel he could take an exception to the charge of the Court.

The Court will not settle and approve as part of the record those portions of the transcript submitted by plaintiff's counsel not specifically included herein,

> for the reasons that (1) the Court does not have a sufficient recollection to permit approval, and (2) such other statements are not necessary to a decision upon the proposition involved.

Plaintiff's counsel put the Court in full possession of the reasons why the Court's interpretation of the applicable law was regarded to be erroneous and distinctly stated plaintiff was entitled to the benefit of an instruction upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur, and supporting authorities were presented. From the foregoing addition to the record on appeal it is the Court's judgment that the underlying purpose of Rule 51 was adequately met.

Upon consideration of branches 2 and 3 of the motion for a new trial, the Court at the outset of this memorandum called attention to the similarity of these branches. In essence, the plaintiff seeks a new trial based upon the claim that the Court erred in refusing to give the plaintiff the benefit of an instruction upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The Sixth Circuit, in the case of *O'Mara v. Pennsylvania R. R. Co.*, 95 F. 2d 762, has declared when the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur is applicable, as follows:

> (9) "The doctrine is one of necessity, applicable where the agency or place of the accident is accessible only to the defendant and under his control, and raises an inference of negligence requiring the defendant to explain the accident, if he may, on grounds other than his negligence, when its nature is such as to make it probable that it would ordinarily not have happened except for his negligence." (P. 763.)

In the instant case both parties have admitted that on August 15, 1961, the defendant had on its property what has variously been described as a wooden bridge, stairway, and platform south of the signal bridge shanty, and that the same constituted a railroad facility, under the

exclusive possession and control of the defendant, which on the date involved herein was being held open for the use of the defendant's employees to gain access to the signal bridge shanty. It has been further admitted that on the night of August 15, 1961, at the time the plaintiff was traversing upon said facility, a board which formed a part of the walking surface thereof was missing, and that the plaintiff stepped into the opening occasioned by the absence of the board. Under these circumstances there is no necessity to use the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The *Miller* and *Shenker* cases, *supra,* relied on by plaintiff's counsel in the Court's chambers, are not applicable to the facts in this case, and the additional cases offered by plaintiff in the motion for a new trial merely supplement *Miller* and *Shenker.*

The motion for a new trial will be overruled.

GIRARD E. KALBFLEISCH,
United States District Judge.

APPENDIX B.

OPINION OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT.

(Decided January 21, 1966.)

Before: WEICK, Chief Judge, EDWARDS and CELEBREZZE, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM. William R. McKee, hereinafter referred to as plaintiff, initiated this action by charging his employer, The New York Central Railroad Company, hereinafter referred to as defendant, with negligence under the Federal Employers' Liability Act, 45 U. S. C., Sections 51 through 60, and amendments thereto. The jury returned a verdict for defendant. Plaintiff appeals.

In the evening hours of August 15, 1961, plaintiff, without the use of his switch lamp, was walking to a signal bridge shanty located on defendant's property. Plaintiff was sent to the shanty by his supervisor with orders to get the rest of the crew. In order to reach the shanty, it was necessary that plaintiff cross a bridge of simple construction. The bridge was not artifically illuminated. At the time of the accident, one of the boards in the platform or landing at the top of the steps leading to the bridge was missing. While walking up the steps, the plaintiff sustained an injury to his right knee when he stepped into the opening occasioned by the missing board.

The main assignment of error urged by the plaintiff is the failure of the trial court to submit to the jury an instruction upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. Plaintiff maintains that the refusal to charge on res ipsa loquitur denied him the inference to which he was entitled that defendant had knowledge or notice of the defect. A witness for the plaintiff testified that several weeks prior to the accident he had observed the board was missing and that

he had reported his observation to the yard master. The same witness gave a contrary statement to the defendant that there was no defect in the step or the board.

On the issue of notice the Court charged:

"3. * * * Defendant has a continuing non-delegable duty to exercise reasonable care to maintain such facility in a reasonably safe condition for use by its employees, which include a duty to exercise ordinary care to inspect and to discover and correct any defect which would render such facility unreasonably hazardous, if such defect was known, or in the exercise of ordinary care could and should have been known by the Defendant with reasonable opportunity to correct the defect. * * *

"4. * * * Actual notice is such notice as is proved to have been given to a party directly and personally, or such as he is presumed to have received personally because the evidence within his knowledge was sufficient to put him upon inquiry. While constructive notice is information or knowledge of a fact imputed by law to a person (although he may not actually have it), because he could have discovered the fact by proper diligence, and his situation was such as to cast upon him the duty of inquiring into it. * * *

" 'You are further instructed that upon proof by Plaintiff of a defect of such facility under Defendant's exclusive possession, management and control, which renders such facility unreasonably hazardous as to his safety as an employee, the Plaintiff upon such proof, makes a prima facie case of negligence against the Defendant which entitles you, the jury, to infer that Defendant was negligent in failing to use reasonable care to provide a reasonably safe facility, and particularly that Defendant could and should have discovered the defective condition thereof, and provided an adequate warning of its existence or corrected the defect.'

"5. * * * If you * * * find that the Plaintiff has proved, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the Defendant had Constructive Notice of the missing board and had reasonable time to repair the defect before the Plaintiff was injured, you should return a verdict for the Plaintiff. * * *

"6. * * * In determining whether ordinary care was used by the Railroad, you will consider whether the Railroad ought to have inspected and discovered the missing plank under the attending circumstances with reasonable opportunity to repair it. If an ordinary person under similar circumstances, or by the use of ordinary care, would have foreseen the result and would have taken precaution to avoid the result, then the performance of the act or the failure to take such precaution constitutes negligence. * * *"

The jury was instructed that they could find notice of the existing condition from the failure of the Railroad to effectively perform its non-delegable, continuing duty to use ordinary care to inspect and disclose and correct any defect which would render such facility hazardous. In addition to this charge on notice, the plaintiff also introduced testimony that the defendant was notified that the bridge was defective. The same witness testified on cross examination that he told the defendant there was no defect in the step. Because of the answer to Interrogatory No. 1, the jury apparently did not believe this witness.

In denying the motion for a new trial, the trial Judge said:

"In essence, the plaintiff seeks a new trial based upon the claim that the Court erred in refusing to give the plaintiff the benefit of an instruction upon the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The Sixth Circuit, in the case of O'Mara v. Pennsylvania R. R. Co., 95 F. 2d 762, has declared when the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur is applicable, as follows:

"(9) 'The doctrine is one of necessity, applicable where the agency or place of the accident is accessible only to the defendant and under his control, and raises an inference of negligence requiring the defendant to explain the accident, if he may, on grounds other than his negligence, when its nature is such as to make it probable that it would ordinarily not have happened except for his negligence.'

"In the instant case both parties have admitted that on August 15, 1961, the defendant had on its property what has variously been described as a wooden bridge, stairway, and platform south of the signal bridge shanty, and that the same constituted a railroad facility, under the exclusive possession and control of the defendant, which on the date involved herein was being held open for the use of the defendant's employees to gain access to the signal bridge shanty. It has been further admitted that on the night of August 15, 1961, at the time the plaintiff was traversing upon said facility, a board which formed a part of the walking surface thereof was missing, and that the plaintiff stepped into the opening occasioned by the absence of the board. Under these circumstances there is no necessity to use the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur."

We agree with the District Court that under these circumstances there was no necessity to apply the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. *Williamson v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp.*, 213 F. 2d 246 (C. A. 6, 1954), and *Miller v. Cincinnati, New Orleans and Texas Pacific Railway Co.*, 317 F. 2d 693 (C. A. 6, 1963), relied upon by the plaintiff, are not applicable for the reason that plaintiff's proofs here establish the defective condition of the bridge without the necessity of applying the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur. The *Miller* case holds that where the doctrine is applicable to permit an inference of a defective instrumentality,

the inference must include all the essential elements of negligence, including an inference that the defendant had constructive knowledge of the defective instrumentality.

We find no error in the Court's charge to the jury, or in the submission of Interrogatory No. 1.

The judgment of the District Court is affirmed.

APPENDIX C.

JUDGMENT OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT.

(Filed January 21, 1966.)

BEFORE: WEICK, *Chief Judge*, EDWARDS and CELEBREZZE, *Circuit Judges*.

APPEAL from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

THIS CAUSE came on to be heard on the record from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio and was argued by counsel.

ON CONSIDERATION WHEREOF, It is now here ordered and adjudged by this Court that the judgment of the said District Court in this cause be and the same is hereby affirmed.

It is further ordered that Defendant-Appellee recover from Plaintiff-Appellant the costs on appeal, as itemized below, and that execution therefor issue out of said District Court.

APPENDIX D.

ORDER OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT DENYING PETITION FOR REHEARING.

Before: WEICK, *Chief Judge*, EDWARDS and CELEBREZZE, *Circuit Judges*.

Plaintiff-Appellant has filed a petition for rehearing on the ground that this Court erroneously quotes the charge of the Trial Court on the issue of notice.

The following charge which was requested by the plaintiff and reproduced in this Court's opinion, at pages 2 and 3, will be deleted:

> "You are further instructed that upon proof by plaintiff of a defect of such facility under Defendant's exclusive possession, management and control, which renders such facility unreasonably hazardous as to his safety as an employee, the plaintiff upon such proof, makes a prima facie case of negligence against the Defendant which entitles you, the jury, to infer that Defendant was negligent in failing to use reasonable care to provide a reasonably safe facility, and particularly that Defendant could and should have discovered the defective condition thereof, and provided an adequate warning of its existence or corrected the defect."

The above quoted requested charge was inadvertently added as part of the charge given by the Trial Court. In affirming the judgment of the District Court, this Court agreed that the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur was not applicable, and that the Trial Court was correct in not giving the above requested charge.

Plaintiff-Appellant also calls to the Court's attention *Oberlin v. Friedman*, 5 O. S. 2d 1 (1965).

Upon consideration, it is ORDERED that the above quoted requested charge of the Plaintiff-Appellant, ap-

pearing at pages 2 and 3 of this Court's opinion, be and it is hereby deleted from the opinion, and the motion for rehearing is denied.

ENTERED BY ORDER OF THE COURT

CARL W. REUSS,
Clerk.